THE EVENING WORLD'S COMPLETE NOVELETTE STAIRS BY RUBY M. AYRES CHRIL - A DURTY , ILL - TEMPERED

was an ugly cat. It stood at the top of the dark you were half-starved." staircase, its arched back and dryly. bristling hair silhouetted against giare from the one small jet on the in her arms. narrow landing, over the worn stairever the ugly wallpaper, the original banging the door behind him. color of which was almost obliterated by dirty finger-marks and jagged

HEY met on the stairs the fol-

The yellow eyes of the cat lookedflections of the gas jet, only more with water; drops still dripped from baneful, and the girl, dragging her the brim of her hat. fired feet wearily up the steep stairs, paused involuntarily as she met their aze. As her eyes grew more accustomed to the ill-lit darkness, she distinguished the outline of the cat's

body and smiled.

"Poor puse!" she said. She held the way.
as inviting hand to the outline.

"I ha She had only been one day in the books," he submitted. hird-rate boarding house, or she on the top stair, enmity expressed in every line of its thin body, had too often vielded to the invitation of coaxing hands and been deceived to evince stiff dignity.

sharply defined; the coarse hair "I think you can management to bristle still more, while by without touching me." cunning crept into the yellow eyes. It reminded the girl of the face of a the girl's lips, and was instantly reenmity, to believe the hand of every ing her with a shudder.

one to be against her. Tired as she was, something humor. miserable top bed-sitting room, furous in the comparison appealed to the nished with bare necessities. girt and she smiled.

"Poor old woman!" she said gently. and going up another stair stroked as if with rusty protest. the cat's head.

After the first start of nervous shrinking, the poor thing seemed absolutely bewildered to find that the vitable cuff or kick was not going to follow; then, with a pitiful little if of deprecation, it wiggled its ugly head again into the girl's "Poor old woman!" she said again,

and this time there was nothing but cheerless room and shut the door. tenderness in her voice. She put down the parcel she had been carrying, and sat down on the

top stair beside the cat. Two waifs! A girl-shabby, hun-Two waits: A gill a cat—ugly, halflooked like manuscript beneath his starved, and friendless; merely tolerarm, and he was whistling cheerfully. ated in its wretched home, if "home" it could be called, because it was glad to appease its hunger by killing the w stray mice who were foolish

enough to appear on the premises in since forgetten the fact, and had given up trying to make anything approaching a toilet, till now

it was an unwholesome, rusty sort of drab-gray, with a thin, wretched tail, I don't cars for people who ill-treat and long, absurd whiskers. It was a quiet time of evening at dumb animals." the boarding house.

Far away-out in the street-the noise of traffic sounded blurred; and amusement. downstairs—in the regions where the beastly cat yet?" he asked ed out an existence—a hard, shrill And it isn't a beastly cat; it's been voice floated up the staircase, mingled

The cat had climbed into the girl's lap now, and was fawning over her shouldn't turn out to be so bad, top floor but to hands, emitting a rusty kind of rum-either," said the man soberly. "But boarding-house. since been thrown out of tune by disuse; and so they remained, these two friendless creatures, till the noise above roused them both

The girl started, and the cat, ceasing in its pitiful attempts to purr, was A man stood on the landing above, her skirts.

looking down at them. He was a fine-looking enough man, counted for anything; but there was a with me now!" n't-care defiance about his face and

whole personality that struck one eyes. somehow rather unpleasantly. and broke off.

The girl rose to her feet, picking She had forgotten the cat, and made

patiently saide, for the landing was the girl's room. narrow "Thank you," said the girl. She noyed.

raised her eyes to his face for the parest second, and met the hard, un- ly, coloring.
misrested stare of a pair of blue eyes; The girl smiled. then she passed on quickly, once more They walked down the narrow stairs looking at her tired face with tender- this letter-come with just such news

She had not gone more than a dozen

soft head that had snuggled so con- tiously.

adingly into her hand.

ugly cat-crouching away from him cheering to know that somebody else n't I win?" Not a yard away a heavy book lay of defeat.

"What are you doing?" "It's that beast of a cat," he ex- step heside her. pinined: "I hate the thing! She "I am going in for that first novel feel sure of prowls round the house and into my competition the Curwen Publishing somehow"—room; she's a thief"— He broke off, Company are offering," he said con-

at her." he added. said the girl cuttingly. "And as to the cat being a thief, the advertisement!"

The girl looked at him scornfully; the yellow gaslight that shed a dismal then she stooped and lifted the cat do," she said half resentfully.

young man watched till the The

lowing evening. It had been raining hard,

The man was just coming down the stairs, buttoned up to his throat in a shabby mackintosh, preparatory to braving the elements.

"I haven't thrown any more

the top stair, enmity expressed in There was a second's hesitation. then the big, mackintoshed figure was in shorthand and typewriting them pressed against the dirty wallpaper in afterward, had seen fit to require her was a soft flush on her cheeks and a the letter.

"If you gather your skirts together The arched back grew even more tightly," said its owner with sarcasm, "I think you can manage to squeeze The faintest ghost of a smile twisted

woman she had once seen—a woman pressed, but she did as he suggested, whom trouble and lack of love had and went on her way.

forced to regard the whole world with . She thought of the bare room await-Home!-the only home she had!-a

She pushed open the door of the room reluctantly, its hinges yielding

The little creak was followed by a soft thud on the floor within, and a faint "micow," as into the radius of light on the landing the ugly cat thrust itself. "Old woman!" said the girl. She

stooped and gathered the little creature in her arms. Its soft body somehow seemed to hold comfort; there was a welcome in the rusty purring. The girl carried it with her into the

The following morning, when the girl opened her door, the man was just passing it, on his way down the stairs He carried a large parcel which

The girl paused, with the door half open, waiting for him to pass. He glanced at her, a half smile in his eyes; then he stopped.

"I haven't got the plague, you know," he said whimsically. TATURE had intended the cat it seems that we are bound to come to be white, but it had long across each other, so couldn't you manage to say 'Good morning' sometimes, or 'Good evening,' or whatever time of these endless days it is?"

For a moment he looked puzzled.

then he laughed-a laugh of genuine "Haven't you forgotten about that

"No" said the girl "I have with the savor of cabbage water and But when you get to know it, it's a

"Perhaps if you got to know me. I bling sound that had once, doubtless, a fellow gets a bit rough if he lives in a purr, but which had long places like this all his life. I haven't spoken to a lady for months! The girl said nothing.

of a door opening on the half-landing HROUGH the half-open door behind her the ugly, thin eight weeks before. body of the cat had thrust

She looked down at it. if width of muscle and length of limb to the man. "She's not a bit wild

He followed the direction of her my room. Puss, puss!"

He stooped, holding one hand to the cat conciliatingly. There was a second's silence, during lings a week," she laughed wearily.

movement to pass the man and con- which the rusty purring stopped tinue her way up the shabby, steep abruptly, the thin back grew arched. tairs to her room on the floor above. and then with a flerce spitting sound As she passed him, he moved im- the cat flew back to the shelter of off

The man stood up; he looked an-

"Ungrateful beast!" he said boyish-

together, the man a few steps behind. ness in his usually careless eyes. She had not gone more than a dozen "I'm not anything," he told her; steps when the sound of a scuffle ar- "but I always imagine that some day stad her-followed by the fall of I am going to set the Thames on fire some heavy object and an animal by writing a book that will be sold out in less than a week, or something harder to bear.' She stopped, listening, and suddenly like that. Meantime, I am starvingremembered the cat, and the ugly, more or less," he added conscien-

She turned and went swiftly back some people," said the girl. She prize. My luck must turn some day, She knew what he was thinking of, down the few stairs to the half-land- thought of a drawer full of manu- and why not now? The book's the and she had asked him half fearfully: scripts in the room upstairs-rejected best thing I've ever written; it's tak-The young man was there, and the manuscripts, all of them-and it was en me months to write! Why should. body else should"besides herself was hoping on in spite

with its pages scattered on the floor. They were out in the street now.

bis eyes twinkling. "I threw a book fidentially. "If only I could get that, hand. I believe the rest would be easy. It's a hundred pound prize; and look what me," he added, "auch great things! it would mean afterwards — look at Some day perhaps I'll be able to tell 'A very manly thing to do, certain- a hundred pound prize; and look what me,"

perhaps you would be the same if "Yes" - the girl looked at him- His eyes were upon her, but she "yes," she repeated. "I am-occasionally," said the man broke off. "I dare say there are ever was cold in his. so many people going in for it, who He loosed her suddenly. want to win quite as much as you

He did not answer. They were at the corner now, where

The girl hailed a passing 'bus. "Goodby," she said.

He looked rather disappointed, and done at a disappointed child. "I am glad I didn't tell him," the with nobody else to love her." girl thought, as she climbed to a seat on the top of the 'bus. "He seemed but checked himself. so hopeful, and, after all, only one of

the office. The particularly flourishing company promoter who paid "Please allow me to pass," said the her the munificent salary of five-andtwenty shillings a week for taking down his seductively worded letters yellow lamplight.

"I--" She would not lift her own, and her hand

ere. Good night." chanically, and "Good night," said the girl. She her, palefaced. from a chair to the floor.

and the girl's dress was heavy the looked rather disappointed, and the girl's dress was heavy the girl smiled, as she might have against the cat's ugly head, "because, to work for her own living? like me, she's alone in the world,

After the first glance the girl us can win the prize." roughly, as he turned away and averted her head, but the man blocked HE girl had been kept late at climbed the stairs again to his own roughly, as he turned away and ceit.

> fice, a typewritten letter lay a dread that this would happen. on her table in the circle of

'The Solitary Way'-being adyours faithfully,

"You are tired out. What a selfish beast I am, keeping you standing out The girl put the letter down me-

carpet from which all trace of pattern bend hid them, then he picked up the the dreary street which sheltered the opened her door. Instantly there was she had not even told him that she asked slowly. The dreary street which sheltered the opened her door. Instantly there was she had not even told him that she asked slowly. The dreary street which sheltered the opened her door. Instantly there was she had not even told him that she asked slowly. The dreary street which sheltered the opened her door. Instantly there was she had not even told him that she asked slowly. The dreary street which sheltered the opened her door. Instantly there was she had not even told him that she asked slowly. The dreary street which sheltered the opened her door. Instantly there was she had not even told him that she had been shyly ashamed. He made no answer, but she over the ugly wallpaper, the original banging the door behind him. house joined the busy main thorough in, and a soft thud as the cat dropped to tell him that she had dared to compete for the prize. And, besides, had The girl stooped and lifted the cat he not so often spoken of his dislike forced herself to speak. for women who wrote?-so often ex-"I love her," she said, her soft face pressed the wish that she did not have Competition! It is I who have beaten words.

The man made a sudden movement, received!

She had listened to his hopes, room. shared them with him; and yet, all heard the letter flutter to the ground; streets, face to face with the bitterHREE days later, when the time, deep in her own heart had then she heard him move past her, ness of his disappointment.

Why, oh why, had she not told him? She did not see it at first; there She shivered as she looked down at

For the moment she had forgotten both, and she had listened and he panted. "There's a back way, out judged the best. We are, madam, that "The Solitary Way" had been smiled, written under a name other than her And now she had quietly and un-save her. I tell you I will go."

"JOHN WEBB. own; forgotten that he could not rec-assumingly done what he had meant He broke away from those ognize it, even if he had heard it. She pulled away from him, steadychanically, and stood staring before ing herself by the table.

"Then you do not know?" she He made no answer, but she saw She made

"It is I who have won the Curwen you. I wrote the prize book. I And now—oh! was ever success wrote 'The Solitary Way.' I never more unwelcome—ever so unwillingly meant to deceive you, but I was afraid after what you said-afraid to she encouraged it. She had deceived him-ever so un- tell you. I-I. Look! Here is the

held it to him, trembling. girl came home from the of- been a presentlment that was almost heard his fingers touch the door handle.

him, caught his arm.

"Don't go! Oh, don't leave me like fled note. that! I did not mean to deceive you.



evening; and her eyes ached and her the door behind her she lifted to her up the three flights of stairs to the could hear the steps of the man from

stairs outside.

He loved her-she was quite sure

heart a message of all that he would

been two months ago; but now---

of his words:

angrily, flercely,

letter in her hand.

"Dear Madam :- I have great

pleasure in informing you that you have won the prize of one

hundred pounds offered by Messrs.

Curwen & Co. in the First

Novel Competition, your novel-

hand had carried straight; to

top floor but one of the shabby whom she had just parted on the A cheap, wheezy clock on the halflanding struck eleven as she turned of it now-though he had not told the bend in the stairs where the man her so, unless his eyes had spoken for had thrown the book at the old cat him when he bade her "good night;" on the night of their introduction unless the kiss he had left on her

A door on the landing above was itself, and now it came close opened, and the man looked down some day tell her himself.

to the girl, rubbing its head against over the balusters.

She stooped her flushed face to the had her skirts.

"I wondered what had happened to soft head of the old cat, which had She looked down at it. you," he said. He came down the climbed on to the table to gently ob"You see?" she said triumphantly stairs two at a time to her side, "How trude its rusty welcome, and kissed
the man, "She's not a bit wild." tired you look! Have you been its peaked face.

well, there are plenty more than the said of yellow implight.

lings a week," she laughed wearily. She stood up slowly, with a little

again. "I wish"-- he began, and broke a repulsive object, and took it up.

"What do you wish?" she asked. silent "Oh! that I were a rich man, or that you hadn't to work so hard, or drew out the inclosure. that I might win this Curwen competition, and oh! heaps of things that will never come true." he added sadly,

"It doesn't do to hope too much for things," she said slowly; "it he had looked at her when he bade makes the disappointment so much her "Good night," and she thought

"I know; but I can't help feeling somehow—I know you'll laugh at me, sure of it—sure—and soon, in a few but all along I've had a sort of pre- days, I shall be able to tell you all but all along I've had a sort of pre-"Fame is a long time coming to monition that I am going to win this that I must not tell you now."

"I hope you will," said the girl. He laughed excitedly. and, without asking, the man fell into shall know. The result was to be so; nobody else can need to win so bling for him to speak again. step beside her.

Then, then, you are not feel sure of a thing; but this time

> He turned suddenly, catching her "It means such great things to

And then, as if in answer to her you. he must hear it, as she stood waiting of the night he had thrown a book at people always turn out for a fire!

—as his steps came nearer—now they the cat—the night she had first seen He walked on again. services for an extra three hours that light in her eyes; and as she closed side the door, now-he had knocked.

he say?

were on the narrow landing, now outopened the door.

He walked past her into the room, and she followed, shutting the door behind her.

There was a letter in his hand, and "You "Good night."

The girl's tears dried in a sudden "Will wish "You are going?" she asked.

"Yes," said the fran. "I will wish ward.
"Dan" behind her.

he held it to her, half blindly. "I've lost," he said, and his voice between them, sounded like the voice of a stranger. "I've lost! The luck has not turned, her for a moment, staring at the after all. I've been beaten! beaten! closed door, then she laughed hysteri-She stooped her flushed face to the beaten!"

He laughed-uncertainly.

The girl went forward.

lips were trembling. "He loves me, old woman," she "He loves me, old woman," she working late?"

"He loves me, old woman," she lips were trembling.

"Tes; I did not leave till a quarter- whispered; "and now you will just "What does it matter?" she said. her wrist, which was the old cat push- past ten. Oh, I suppose I need not have to make friends with him, too, "Ch, it doesn't matter. I am sure "Turning, she saw the old cat push- past ten. Oh, I suppose I need not have to make friends with him, too, "Ch, it doesn't matter. I am sure "What does it matter?" she said. her wrist, and the wish matter with the life a soft head was thrust against her wrist.

"What does it matter?" she said. her wrist, and the wish matter with the life a soft head was thrust against her wrist. Turning, she saw the old cat push- past ten. Oh, I suppose I need not have to make friends with him, too, "Ch, it doesn't matter. I am sure "Turning, she saw the old cat push- past ten. Oh, I suppose I need not have to please me, because— perhaps—if he your book was the best, much the life." oblige him, and if I had refused- knows what will happen!" Then her unconsciously she had linked her well, there are plenty more ready to eyes fell on the letter, lying in the hands about his arm, and bent her burying her wet face in its fur. face to his cost sleeve.

"Oh, don't mind! Don't mind!" she The man looked at her and away throb at her heart; then she put out a subbed desolately. "It doesn't mathand reluctantly, as one might do to ter, it doesn't matter." He lifted her face and held it, his Overhead the man's steps were hand beneath her chin, looking down

The girl broke the seal slowly, and at her with miserable eyes. "Docan't matter?" he repeated mirthlessly, "Doesn't matter? Why But she knew its contents before meant everything to me-everyshe had been sure that it would come. -such good news, as it would have She thought of the man's eyes, as

she read them. Somehow, all along, thing! I have been a fool, but I was ested, weary eyes. his words:
"My luck has turned now; I am would hardly speak to me, and I've the shouting died away swallowed up hoped, and waited, and waited in the heart of the sleeping city.

His voice dragged in silence, then The man walked slowly succionly he burst out in passionate. He was footsore and weary, but he his head and stared at him, as if She knew what he was thinking of, anger and disappointment.

"And if you do not win? If some, lost everything! I've been beaten. He had built for himself a castle and by a woman'" And he had interrupted her, almost

You must not say that; I shall face in her hands.

hereathlessly. of his success.

What would be say? What sould At first I never thought I should win it. I never wanted to after I knew curious light in the sky. The man Then I was afraid to tell you - stopped, looking about him wonderthoughts, she heard his door open The man looked at her. His face ingly; then he remembered. above—his step on the stairs.

The man looked at her. His face ingly; then he remembered. Was white and there was a cold, cruel Of course, it was a fire so Her heart beat so loud she thought look in his eyes, which reminded her

Twice she tried to answer, but her and his voice was harsh. "I must bead swam with sheer weariness as lips a bunch of sweet-scented violets voice died away in her throat; then congratulate you. You must have en. him and the marries at length she dragged herself slowly she held in her hand. Overhead she she went forward mechanically and joyed many a laugh at my expense. I will wish you 'Good night.

The door opened and shut again The girl stood where he had left

"I might have known," she told berself. "I might have known."

"What the"— he began irritably, creature—only it used to steal from spoken—"but Mr. Stories asked me to wins the competition—well, who best"— She was sobbing now, and purr. She stooped, gathering the little friendless creature in her arms, You love me better than he does, Old Woman," she said, trying to

laugh. Then she broke down. HE man stood back mechanithe horses straining, the men

He looked after it with uninter-

sure. I felt somehow, so sure that The London streets were very was going to win. Doesn't the luck quiet-almost deserted-and the sudturn? I thought mine had at last den rush and thunder of the engine lived. when I met you, and I've been waiting den rush and thonder of the engine for it to tell you that I love you. I've seemed to break the night stillness ed you ever since that first eve- with terrific force and to leave it the crowd to the side of the stout conning we met on the stairs, when you more deadly silent as the clang and The man walked slowly

nger and disappointment. was hardly conscious of it, for his "And now it's gone—all gone. I've heart and brain felt numb. and it had fallen about him, for its agony of impatience in his voice. The girl gave a little cry, she foundation had been nothing but a shrank away from him, hiding her slender hope, and the great wind of disappointment had come sweeping did hear there was a young lady, she

to deceive you?" She broke off woman-a woman he loved. He had dreamed of a time when He looked at her wonderingly, and he could lift from her shoulders the her and broke away. known, that he did not know now, take away the necessity for her to she got hin. Keep back, there." it was she who had robbed him work-when, with his own mighti-

thrown them down.

to do-and had won without a word would have held him. He felled one

his optimistic boasting. at her before he shut the door he. the girl he loved: the wirl whose fortween them he had almost hated her. a violent effort and him had come uppermost when he not forgiven him? How could be saw the tears in her eyes, heard her live if it were too late now to ask her

> All along she must have laughed at him. Of course she had smiled to suspended breath. herself at his optimism, even while

Fallure, surely that hardest to side began to sob. "Good night," he said, almost wittingly-but still, it had been de- letter. It came this evening." She bear of all the world's misfortunes. stalked grimly at his side as he aim-There was a terrible silence; she lessly walked the dreary London

Beaten, and by a woman! and by the woman he loved. If only She looked up then, flew across to it had been somebody else. A church clock struck 1 with muf-

The chime seemed to be far away thickly. the stars a spectre hand were tolling

the hour. The man turned his steps homeward.

hours, hardly conscious of what he was doing, deadened to all feeling but the overpowering one of disappointprobably asleep, and smiling in her

deep at the thought of her success and his failure. Smiling, when she had cried to him beside her silently. so broken-heartedly. When she had begged him not to leave her.

The sluggish blood in his veins to remember, but it all seemed a dank; only in the darkness, before

eding where he had failed? A sting of self-contempt stirred the man's

He walked on more quickly.

now, where the third-rate boarding- friends with you," said the girl. "I house hid its ugliness. It was but a think she quite understands. Puss, few hundred yards away round the puss."

even women with shawls and wraps along the quilt to the girl.

about their heads, looking as if they The girl's eyes challenged the man had dressed hurriedly. And what a to laugh.

Of course, it was a fire somewhere,

"I must congratulate you," he said, would help pass the time if he went touch of his hand. to see it; help drag away the inter-

He caught the arm of a street frowning. The girl's tears dried in a sudden urchin cunning by, "Where's the fire?"

old 'Arry. Five engines there."

heart.

A soft paw touched her hand as she but the third-rate one where he him- world who does. I sound like a cow-There were tears in her eyes, her stood leaning heavily against the ta- self lived-where the girl lived? His ard, I know, but you must forgive heart seemed up in his throat stifling me, you must"ble; a soft head was thrust against him. He tried to console himself. There was no reason for the sudden and gently touched his bowed head panic which had seized him, it was so The hair by his forehead was all seldom now that lives were lost in a singed, and the girl smiled tenderly fire. Of course, everybody would be as she looked at him. safely out by this time, even those who were on the fourth floor, where the girl's room was. But he ran on, ing arrogantly above her on the statts

cally as the fire engine came was in full view of the burning dashing around the corner, house, and the narrow, ugly road, with his wonderful schemes for bringblack with a crowd of curious spectators, the dense volumes of smoke nowfrom the fire engines, hideous with the hiss and fall of the water, the she said. dealening roar of the flames, the and it was the third-rate boarding

house where he lived-where the girl He pushed his way through the stable, who was endeavoring to keep gleam of the old audacity in his eyes.

"Everybody out, constable?" His breath came gaspingly. The officer of the law slowly turned

making up his mind whether he should answer or not. "Is everybody out, man?"

"Yes. Leastways, they was; but I "And in another day or two we win! I must! I have counted on it He knew, then. She waited trem- along over its battlements and had wanted to go back for some pet she'd left behind. They brought her out auch as I do!"

Then, then, you are not angry He had been beaten in the struggle once in the escape, but she said she'd

And now! She looked down at the with me; you know I did not mean for success and happiness by a left a cat upstairs, that she must go wild thing when they tried to stop I don't know in a flash she saw that he had not burden she carried, when he could whether she's hout now or whether

> ness, he could make enough for them "I know every inch of the place," (Copyright, 1922, Metropolitan Newspapers The man fought his way nearer.

on to the roof. Let me go! I must

He broke away from those who the thing he had lost in spite of all to the ground, and now he was freefree to risk his life in that seething In that moment when he had looked burning cauldron-where she was All that was cruel and brutal in could he let her die when ane had

pardon? Outside the crowd waited with

"They're lost, sure enough," said a man solemnly, and a woman at his

Then suddenly a wild shout went up from a hundred throats. A rush forward was made, a score of willing hands were stretched to the black ened, scorched figure of a man that staggered and reeled through the burning doorway-a man with a woman clutched tight to his breast as he toppled forward.

"I've got the cat, too," he said "They were both on the overhead above the clouds, as if up in stairs. It scratched mb, the beast; but I've brought them both out." He laughed stupidly, lurched and fell heavily to the ground.

He had been walking the streets for FT HE room was so dark when the man entered that for a moment he stood blinking uncertainly before he saw the He thought of the girl-she was girl lying on a sofa by the window, propped up by pillows.

He went forward then and stood She was awake, her eyes open, smiling up at him.

"Please don't look so frightened." seemed to thaw, and flow slowly again. she said weakly. "I'm nearly well What had he said to her? He tried now." She lifted one bandaged hand from the coverlet. "It's only this," she said.

stained face, her pleading eyes, her hoarsely.

stained face, her pleading eyes, her hoarsely.

"Yes." She laid it back on the
"Yes." She laid it back on the like a sigh. "It might have been so much worse," she added bravely. "I

might never have got out at all if you hadn't come. It was so terrible. SUDDEN longing to get back tried to get down those stairs, but the to her seized him. He cat was struggling so." She shiv-thought with dread of the "She scratched me when I tried to hours that must still pass pick her up," said the man. "Even

before he could see her, tell her he then, you see, she could not forget her hatred of me." He laughed a was sorry, ask her to forgive him.

He was quite near the dingy street

He hat red of me. He hat she is to be "I have told her that she is to be "I".

"A MAN WITH A WOMAN CORNER.

But how noisy the streets had sudlon at the foot of the couch, and a
denly grown. There were people hurfaint apologetic "Micow" as the old rying along, running, men and boys, white cat rose stiffly and shambled

> "Speak to her," she commanded. The man stretched his hand across

the couch gingerly. "Puss." the engine had just passed him. How The animal looked at him, opened its mouth to spit, but apparently changed its mind and sat motionless Where was it? He wondered idly. It with flattened ears submitting to the

> "You see," said the girl triumph-The man stood upright again,

"I did not come here to make friends with the cat," he said. The boy jerked a dirty thumb for- came to"- He broke off, then suddenly he dropped on his knees beside "Darn 'ere; jist round the corner, the girl. "I came to ask you to for-it's a boardin' 'ouse. Burning like give me," he said humbly. "That night. I think I was mad with dis-The man stood still for a second, appointment. I know it isn't any exthen suddenly he began to run; a cuse, but if you could forgive me quick, nameless fear had gripped his some day—I'll wait as long as you A boarding house. What boarding don't send me away: if you don't house was there down in this direction care for me there isn't a soul in the

> The girl lifted her bandaged hand She thought of the day she had first seen him, the day he stood smil-

after he had thrown a book at the call fear clutching at his heart.

And now he had crossed the main and her heart ached for the change

ing the world to his feet, whereas "There isn't anything to forgive," he said. "And-and-oh, dear," she deafening roar of the flames, the added, half orying, "I wish you would victous crackle of the burning timber; not look so sad. Do you think? Don't you think." she asked mischievousiy, lrying to laugh, "that you could manage to smile if I let you-just for once

throw a book at the cat?" The man looked up then-a sudden "There is something else I would rough rather do," he said, bending

ins face to hers. "May I?" It was fully an hour later when the man remembered the doctor's restrictions about a "ten minute visit," and he started guiltly. Something The man repeated his question an soft and warm was curled coxily 'n the bend of his arm. He looked down wonderingly, then he laughed.
"It seems," he said, "that I have

no more worlds to conquer. He gently stroked the disfigured head of the "Old Woman.

"She won't purr, anyway," the girl back for the cat. She fought like a then suddenly the silence was broken by a rusty kind of rumbling sound that had once doubtless been a purr. The "Old Woman" had signed the declaration of Peace!

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